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Bard

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Sit on my lap
and tell me a story,
tell me many
all at one time,

the story your lips
say and the story
your hips tell
moving to find ease

and your knees
talk too, swinging
forward and back,
all the adjustments

a body must explain
to be with another
of its kind, the stories
we can't stop telling

although we try,
closing our mouths
as if that could ever
silence what we say.

10 March 2013

DRAWING-ROOM BLUES: Ellington & Strayhorn

=====

**Might be able to
but why don't you?**

**This wine is from no grapes
the cup spills all over the table
gets your satin soaked
with sunlight juices**

**and down in the stable those white
horses kick against their stalls
they want some too
whatever it is,**

**horse melancholy
mouths full of sugar cubes,
 why does the lady
come down with dark in her hands
and rub ashes on their silver coats?**

**How can I guess the beauty in somebody's dream
that sends her, but I do, how can I ride
a horse on the other side of the wall, but I do,**

**right through the window, break the glass
easy as a piece of cheese**

wondering where all your bread has gone

**o lady where is my after all, where is my bread,
and how vague my desire is even now,
even for the horse, your very own horse.**

10 March 2013

= = = = =

**Voices in the night
all in me, all my voice**

only a few phrases can I rouse to capture

*three voices from one mouth
take off the dragon girth, hard landing
the scrub of skin
against the dawn
the hurrying*

**only scraps left from that transmission,
I tried to sleep again, I slept, for hours,
and still more voices, yielding to now.**

**What is the meaning of a thing in a dream,
a clean bare new café
with a pretty girl in charge, her brother
the chef, but across Tinker Street a new
much fancier brasserie full of people.
But nobody here. What does it mean
in this Café Muoc, and I resolved
to help this bare place win custom,
I touched her face**

the scrub of skin

what is this all about, no story here,
it's bland and blank and quiet,
where are all the roaring
dragon prophet voices that I heard
coming out of my dream mouth,

and the lost words
the memory of something important I said
that isn't here when I need it.
Here in this clean new empty place
nothing interesting here
except maybe the name the woman said.

11 March 2013

= = = = =

1.

**Welcome rain
calendar soaked
welcome daylight
princess in a folding boat
scattered pleasures
of a householder
lost on the map
catless coatless heart asleep.**

2.

**Morningstar skipped this house
woke so late
pilfering light from raindrops
hear them in the downspout
making a noise like a prayer
wheel clacking
years ago in another rain.**

3.

**Everything always reminding.
Video games will produce
a nation of isolated geniuses.
Fact. A white car vanishes in trees.**

4.

Rumpelstiltskin was his name then
now he is young and glamorous
but still wants what he can't have

by the nature of things
her long hair her air
of not really caring what he does.

5.

Folklore was my ferry.
I bided your time,
crossed your T's,
I swarmed down
the smell of your roses
and all the new words
started to fall apart,
a mushroom and a little
man beside it, eyes
a-glint with love or
something like it, pale
amber needles of the pine
big as spears by his
tiny feet. Who
art thou? I enquired
and he: I am the one
they find beneath

all the words they
ever knew, spoke
or kept still—
I am what is left,
I am your will.

6.

You never can tell
what time will do,
gone today and here tomorrow
like the moon on her back in the sea
or like the blackbird whistling
in the year's last snow
just before you woke you
maybe heard. Or like
Monday all over again.

7.

But what could he know,
spirit in the rigging
topsails of the house
the sea of earth beneath it heaving,
this way to dawn
immaculate mischances of the wind
strokes everyone in passing,
your deck flies home
a flock of tarot cards

**birding through the infraspaces
until even I can tell
a tree from a longboat—
they swarmed ashore
slapping their broadswords on their chests
to make a great groaning in the air
and the story closed again around him.**

12 March 2013

= = = = =

She stands in the wheat field
looking for music
the wind hears her
the crow the wind
everything the same but the sun
a face she knew and then forgot

she forgot the sun
and stood in the pond
the blue wave slipped
between her thighs
and she was born again as grain

born again as a bird
busy in the sky
over all this
she is born as the sky
too often to be the sun

she has forgotten
who she was supposed to be
so she has to be born again

born of the sound of water
the wind in the wheat field

**the crow calling and calling again
to someone she can't see**

she has to be born again from what she hears.

12 March 2013

= = = = =

I can't hear you I'm me

**All I can think about is Vienna
not so many years ago
quiet Sunday morning the horses
clattering around the church
even before the bells,
all I can think about is how
I knelt (did I really kneel?)
at the tombs of dead emperors
grieving for the state,
that there is such a thing
as a state and now not even
pretty or gilded or with music,
all I can think is how I walked
all afternoon in the Prater
in cold rain looking keenly
for someone I couldn't name
couldn't recognize even if
that person had sauntered by
indifferent to the wetting
we were getting, maybe that
acceptance would have made**

**me know that this was the one,
all I can think about is how many
places I have walked
how many cities how many rains,
all I can think about is how
far everything this, all
I can think about is you.**

12 March 2013

= = = = =

**Whistle at the door
wave humbling up
this pebble shore
bladderwrack snags
missionary feet**

**crash of canoa on wet sand
o lift this war
on a plain man's back
all the way to the foot of the cross—**

**a day is wind and danger.
Who is the god
worshipped in this body?**

**Who comes to call
daring to speak another language?**

13 March 2013

A DAY

**This day also I greet you
is one whole year.**

**This morning
is an obligation.**

**Remember in the Hadith
Muhammad is said
to have found his uncle
reading the Bible—**

**I brought you he said
a whole new law all
white and fresh and clean
why bother with the old
stuff the halfway-here?**

So it is with the day.

**There was nothing at all
before this hour.**

**Put on cinnabar to please
the glimpse you get of god.**

**And that perfume
matches your new eyes.**

13 March 2013

= = = = =

**Time to refill the clock.
Imagine if the whole world
ran like me. The sun
would run out of silences.
I would have long ago
misplaced the moon, you
have to look for it
find it in some pocket
by its own silver light
like yours, confusing me.
The wind would be asleep.
Or drunk or raving poetry.
Opaque language.
Boiling oceans. Every
mouth a different language,
a thousand cases of each noun
and no verbs at all.**

13 March 2013

BHAGAVAD GITA

**They call it the song
of god. It is small
black as a horsefly
landed calmly
on a linen curtain.**

*The Song of God**
**or blessed Gita or gatha
or gather rosebuds
out of the sky,
a bird of a book
small as a saint's ego,
small as sunshine
slipping through a crack
in your windowshade,
weak as a rainbow
glorious as a tugboat
crushing north through ice
up our frozen river
a week before this book
came into my hands.
Our water, the song
of god is made
of water, of skin,
out of the curves
in our simple geometry,**

lined notebooks,
paperclips crayons,
hair in your eyes.
The song of god
keeps you from seeing
keeps me from reaching
out at the arroyo
to catch hold of some
lost sheep, nothing there,
oily fleece, lanolin
all over my hands, song
of god, what would happen
if I touched a song
with oily hands,
rubbed my hands
all over the music
to make it ours,
all over god
to make him us?
O the strange geometries
of our adoration,
houses we build in the sky
and go to if we die
who can deny?
A little book
beyond the self
someone lends to me

and someone in me
reads, someone
in me understands,
someone remembers
from all the times
that came before,
the lives, all the gods
whose singing sang
you into existence
and me too, to witness
with the dark
eyes of music what one
said to another
on the brink of war
even if one of them
is a god or a woman,
even if it is someone
we know, listen
someone at the door
opening the leaves
the book breaks open
with a sound like
someone becoming you.

13March 2013

(A FOOTNOTE TO)

The Song of God

so dangerous

these words,

vague but fanged—

the scariest is *of*,

I'm not sure about *the*

that pretends to be

so sure of itself, but

I don't believe at all in *of*.

The only word I really

believe in is *song*.

13 March 2013